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CONTINUITY OF FOURTH/FIFTH CENTURY SILVER PLATE IN THE SIXTH/SEVENTH CENTURIES IN THE EASTERN EMPIRE

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Continuité de l'argenterie entre IV^e^-V^e^ et VI^e^-VII^e^ siècles dans l'Empire d'Orient

Une étude comparative des deux principaux groupes entre lesquels se répartit l'argenterie tardive conservée, l'un attribué aux ateliers occidentaux du IV^e^ siècle, l'autre aux ateliers orientaux des VI^e^-VII^e^ siècles, fait apparaître une grande continuité entre ces deux périodes. Après avoir examiné les éléments permettant de situer ces objets chronologiquement et géographiquement (en recoupant l'information donnée par les timbres d'atelier, les inscriptions pondérales, les données textuelles et les lieux de découverte) l'auteur met en évidence cette continuité tout d'abord dans le répertoire décoratif : les thèmes païens, qui se perpétuent, n'étant plus perçus dans leur valeur religieuse, mais comme expression d'un classicisme post-païen. De même les types et les fonctions se perpétuent. Toute une série de formes fondamentales (plats et bols, aiguières, bassines, miroirs, patères) subsistent ; c'est surtout dans le cas des calices que de nouvelles formes l'emportent sur les anciennes. La continuité est également évidente pour les techniques (décor repoussé, appliqué, ajouré ; niellage, dorure). Le contrôle exercé par l'Etat sur la production portant son timbre peut expliquer ce conservatisme, décelable également dans la composition du métal, les formats, les formes et le poids des objets.

One large body of late antique silver plate is dated or ascribed to the fourth century – much of it credited to western workshops – and a second large body is identified by imperial control stamps as having been produced in the sixth and seventh centuries in eastern workshops. Are these two bodies correctly identified and are they related? Few objects are firmly dated in between, and most attributions to the fifth century are by default[1].

Yet the gap could be bridged by an examination of at least one class of silver. In 1929, Leonid Matzulevich, in his *Byzantinisches Antike*[2], demonstrated by means of dated control stamps that silver of a classical kind continued to be manufactured until 661. Unfortunately, a comprehensive survey of late antique silver set within this time frame has yet to be written. Donald Strong's essential handbook stops with the fifth century[3]. Until recently, study of the manufacturing techniques of post-fourth-century silver was limited and little effort made to establish a typology of objects or to categorize their functions, despite the continued systematic study of Byzantine control stamps by Erica Dodd[4]. Concerted efforts to elucidate this later silver have been made in the past ten years in the area of church silver, most notably on the Sion, Kaper Koraon and Gallunianu treasures[5]. But later domestic plate has remained largely neglected since Matzulevich, with the exception of the attention it attracted at the time of the 1988 Berlin exhibition of silver in the Hermitage[6]. In fact, the largest collections of late domestic plate are located in the Hermitage and in the British Museum. Since a number of domestic items from the latter's permanent collection formed part of its recent special exhibition of Byzantine art[7], the symposium on Silver Plate in the World of Late Antiquity, held concurrently in the same museum, was an appropriate forum in which to re-examine the present subject, however briefly.

1. M. Mundell Mango, *Der Seuso-Schatzfund. Ein Ensemble westlichen und östlichen Kunstschaffens,* in *Antike Welt,* 21, 1990, p. 70-88; Eadem, *The Sevso Treasure Hunting Plate,* in *Apollo,* July 1990, p. 2-13.
2. L. Matzulevich, *Byzantinisches Antike,* Berlin-Leipzig, 1929.
3. Strong 1966.
4. Cruikshank Dodd 1961.
5. Work on church silver is summarised in M. Mundell Mango, *Introduction* in *Ecclesiastical Silver Plate* 1992, p. xxi-xxxii.
6. *Silbergefässe aus Ermitage.* But see now F. Baratte 1993, p. 51-94.
7. *Byzantium* 1994; see p. 13-14 and nos. 1, 10-16, 35-36, 51-52, 74-76, 96, 133-135.

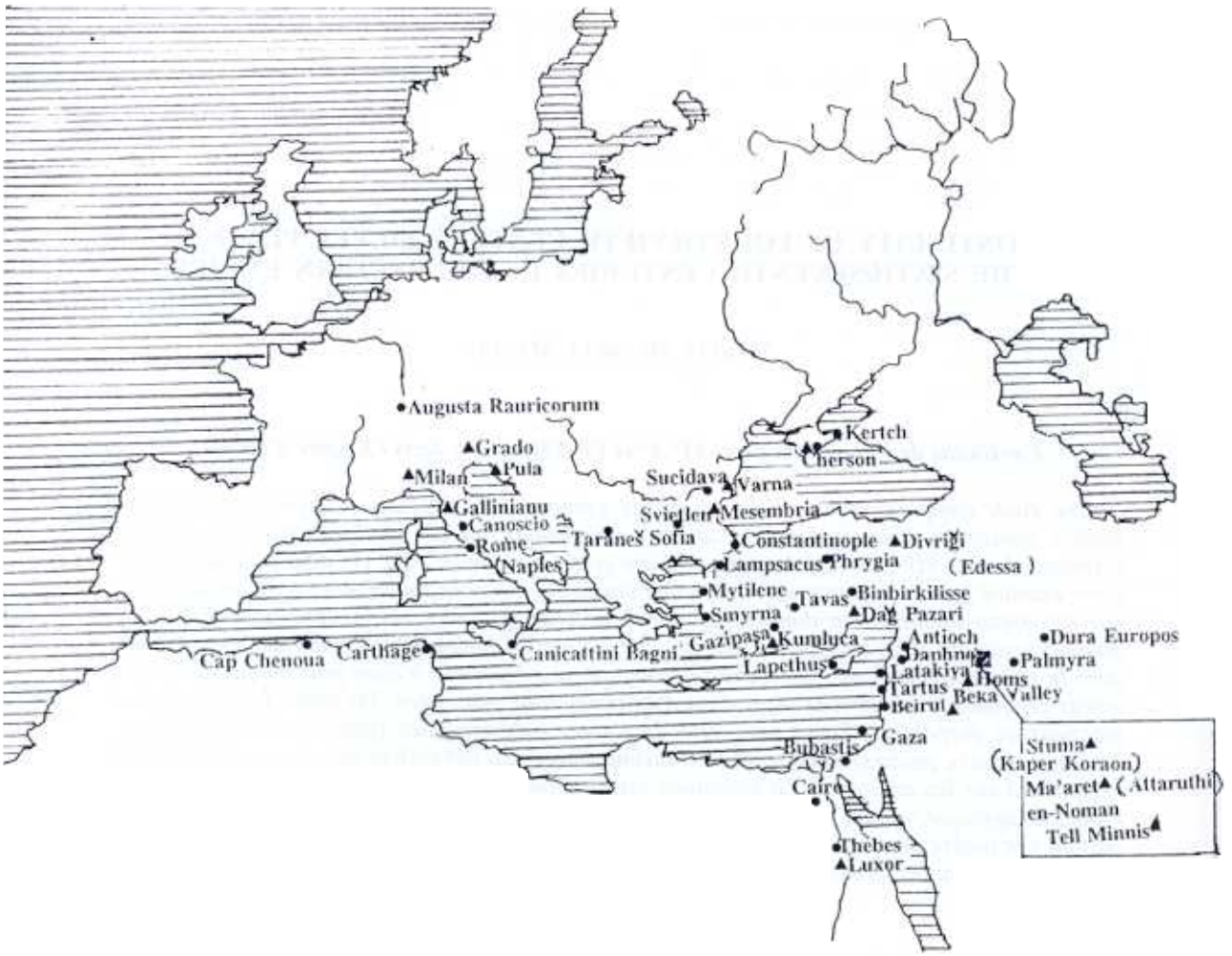


Fig. – Map of the findspots of silver plate in and beyond the Eastern Empire in Late Antiquity.

Fig. 2. – Silver hexagonal censer supported by peacoks, stamped ca. 565 : Sion traesure from Asia Minor (photo courtesy of the Byzantine Collection, D. O., Washington D. C.).

I. Chronological and geographical aspects

In the following examination of the continued manufacture and use of Roman silver through the seventh century in the Eastern Empire, the chronological and geographical aspects of the discussion will be based upon the combined evidence of control stamps, inscribed silver and findspots.

1. Control stamps

As Erica Dodd maintained in her study, control stamps were contemporary with the manufacture of the object, because they were applied between shaping and decoration[8]. An examination performed at David Buckton's request in 1988, in the Department of Scientific Research of the British Museum, of a silver bowl from Cyprus concluded that after the bowl was raised and finished without decoration (except perhaps the relief on the rim), it was stamped (641-651) and then "the area on the underside with the footring was supported in some way, possibly with bitumen, and the design was chased on the surface. The bitumen was then removed and a few areas were punched from the back in order to increase the relief on the front surface"[9].

Most control stamps provide a date: they give the name of an emperor, or, in the case of the Licinius stamps, they appear on objects inscribed with the emperor's name. A few stamps also specify a place of manufacture and the overwhelming number of stamps in Greek already indicates application in the Eastern Empire. Stamps of the fourth century name the eastern imperial capitals of Nicomedia and Antioch. Silver stamping survived or was revived at Antioch in the early seventh and is also attested at Carthage in 541. The complicated system of five stamps in use between 498 and 651 is normally ascribed to Constantinople, although at least one dissenting voice has suggested contemporary stamping in the mints of Antioch and Alexandria, as well as at Tarsus close to silver mines in the Taurus. Relative to "regional" silver stamps bearing the imperial name or image, Michael Hendy has cited the case of Alexandria producing gold coin in 565-610. Other types of stamp were in use between the early fourth and 498; again they are mostly in Greek. One type, attributed to the late fourth century and the fifth, incorporates a normally unidentified city Tyche, presumably that of the place where the stamp was applied. Tyche stamps appear on four bowls – three beaded and one fluted – and a large ewer decorated with Muses identified in Greek. The second type, probably of the fifth century and either round or rectangular gives a person's name in Greek, in the genitive, together with a cross, but with no geographical indications. The ten objects so stamped include a set of five bowls without the beading, two plain plates and a decorated washing set (fig. 5b) and plate[10].

2. Inscriptions

As with the stamps, the language of inscriptions can indicate something about origin, although craftsmen and owners were mobile and Latin was the official language of the entire empire until the sixth century, and appeared on coins until the eleventh. In contrast to contemporary Latin weight inscriptions, most late antique Greek weight inscriptions are dotted rather than scratched and hence probably put on at manufacture. In this and other details, the consistency observed over nearly five centuries is notable. Unlike the Latin weight inscriptions, those in Greek routinely specify the units of measure by word rather than abstract symbol, using specific ligatures. Between the third and seventh centuries "pound" (λιτρα) is indicated by lambda with either an iota (Ⱡ) or an abbreviation sign – a stroke ⁄ or an S ⁄s. While lambda-iota is more common, both forms remain nearly constant throughout the period. Both ounce (οὐγγία) ligatures (omicron upsilon ȣ and gamma with small omicron ᵧ) span the entire period. Scruple (γράμμα) is uniformly gamma rho. Some Greewk weight inscriptions contain other indications: crosses (as in the control stamps) were introduced in the fifth century and personal or place names (such as BECA on the Concesti situla, fig. 7e) of workshop personnel and location[11].

3. Findspots

Several groups of church silver have been found together, many with inscriptions indicating the names of the church and its location where the objects had belonged, which in all cases were villages, not cities[12]. Finds of late antique silver have been made at over 60 sites in both the western and eastern parts of the empire, within an area extending from Northern Ireland to Armenia, from the Volga River to Nubia. Not all the silver found within this vast area is equally well known. Finds made in the Western Empire have been much more systematically identified and studied than have silver objects coming from the Eastern Empire[13] many of which have been acquired by western museums (European and American) and sometimes displayed as "unprovenanced". Where silver objects were found does not indicate where they were made, and stamped or signed pieces in the Kaiseraugst and Munich Treasures demonstrate that a single collection could contain objects made in two or more cities[14].

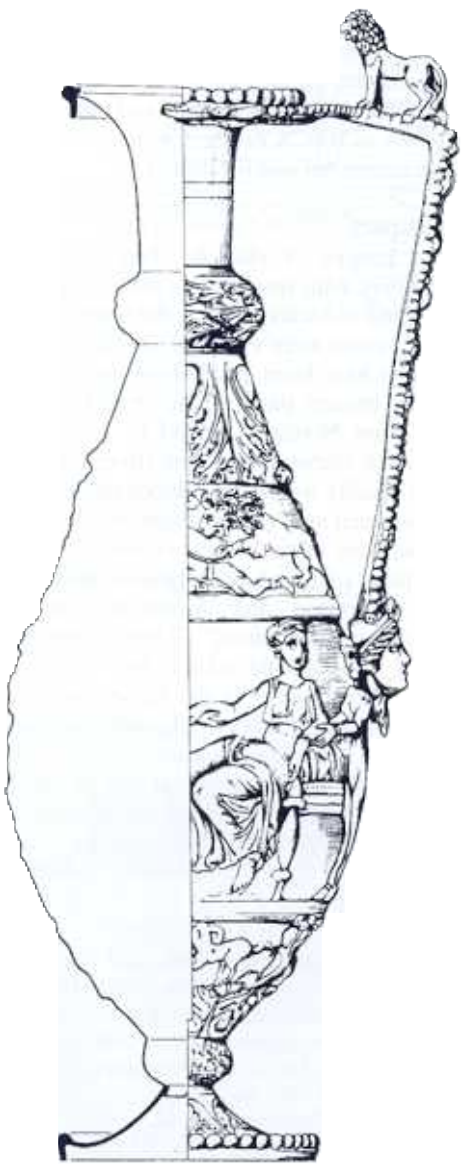
In considering the geographical side of our subject we can turn first to texts where there are repeated references to domestic silver produced and acquired in the Eastern Empire up through the seventh century. Libanius refers to

8. Cruikshank Dodd 1961, p. 1-3.
9. I should like to thank Dr. S. Bowman, Mrs. J. Lang, Prof. M. Tite and Mr. D. Buckton for permission to cite this report.
10. M. Mundell Mango, *The Purpose and Places of Byzantine Silver Stamping* in *Ecclesiastical Silver Plate* 1992, p. 203- 215; M. F. Hendy, *The Administration of Mints and Treasuries, 4th to 7th Centuries, with an Appendix on the Production of Silver Plate* in *The Economy, Fiscal Administration and Coinage of Byzantium*, London, 1989, no. IV.
11. *Sevso Treasure*. Part One, p. 38-44.
12. Mundell Mango, *Introduction* (note 5 *supra*).
13. On western finds see e.g. *Trésors d'orfèvrerie* 1989. On eastern finds see M. Mundell Mango, *The Archaeological Context of Finds of Silver in and beyond the Eastern Empire*, in *XIII Congressus Internationalis Archaeologiae Christianae*, Split, 25.09-1.10.1994, Split, in press.
14. *Kaiseraugst* 1984, nos. 60, 63, 65; Overbeck 1973.

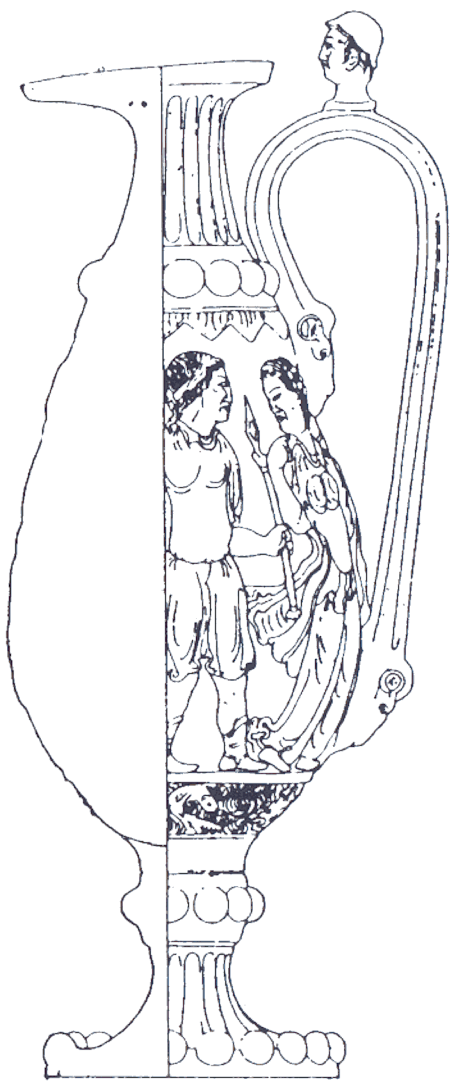
a

b

Fig. 3. – **a.** Silver bowl acquired in Egypt: Islamic Department, MMA, New York (photo author).
b. Silver bowl, fourth century (?). Part of treasure from Latakiya, Syria: The Cleveland Museum of Art (ph. a.).



a



b

Fig. 4. – **a.** Silver ewer decorated with scenes of Paris and Helen. Found 1983 in the tomb of a general Li-Xian dated AD 569, in Guyuan, Ningxia, China. Drawing after B. I. Marshak and W. Anazawa, in *Cultura Antiqua*, 1989, fig. 3. **b.** Silver ewer decorated with scenes of Hippolytus and Phaedra: Sevso treasure (Drawing courtesy of the Marquess of Northampton 1987 Settlement).

panic stricken officials fleeing Antioch in 387 after the Riot of the Statues, each with several mule-drawn carts of personal silverware. They returned and life continued, for in 514 in the same city the patriarch stated that people "take their meals from silver plates carried by numerous servants; that women go to the bath with silver articles weighing many pounds and that they are carried about on seats adorned with silver, as were the bits of their mules." Again at Antioch, an imperial emissary paid low prices in gold for silver to inhabitants fleeing a Persian attack in 540. In ca. 500, Chrysaorios from Tralles had his own silver service with him at law school in Beirut. And in 591, a magnate of Edessa impressed the Persian king with his dinner and drinking services. In the mid-fifth century a *magister militum per Orientem* (Jordanes 466-9) had made a series of *missoria,* and there are apparent references in 587 and in 634/4 to silver services being looted from the tents of eastern generals in battle. In ca. 400 at Jerusalem a bishop had 1500 lbs. of silver in his personal possession, possibly as a service, and a deacon had 100 lbs. of silver. In seventh-century Alexandria another bishop set aside 30 pounds of gold to buy himself a set of carved silver which could have weighed up to 540 pounds. At the other end of the social scale is a seventh-century prostitute with a silver situla and an illiterate sailor and his wife who, according to their Egyptian will dated 583/4, owned "objects of gold, silver, copper, brass, clothing etc." The donation of family silver to be recycled into liturgical silver or given to the poor became a literary topos: the conversion of the silver symbolizing the spiritual conversion of the donor from a wordly to a religious life. Examples include: Publius of a senatorial family of Zeugma on the Euphrates in the 4th century, Porphyrios of Gaza in c. 400, Theodore, *cubicularius*, and Sosiana widow of another *cubicularius,* both in Constantinople in the mid-sixth century[15]. The high esteem of silver in late antiquity is demonstrated by the Palatine Anthology's epigrams written in the sixth-century by cultivated civil servants anxious to display their good taste and erudition by describing works of art such as a *missorium* with a scene from the Odyssey[16]. Epigrams and witticisms were also engraved on spoons and other silver.

Looking at recovered objects geographically, the following summary provides a framework for constructing a finds-profile for three areas: Asia Minor, Syria/Palestine, and Egypt/North Africa[17]. Silver objects found or acquired in Asia Minor include the Lampsacus treasure discovered in the nineteenth century (fig. 8b), a stamped plate acquired at Binbirkilisse in 1908, the Mitylene treasure excavated in 1951 (fig. 6), a set of plates acquired at Smyrna also in 1951, as well as the heaviest Roman treasure recovered, that unearthed at Kumluca in Lycia in 1963 (the Sion Treasure, fig. 2). Asia Minor silver with no known or published context includes a large Dionysiac bowl from Tavas now in Washington, a plate with Athena from Gazipasa near Antalya, a casket discovered in Phrygia in 1920 and now in Boston, and, from unspecified sites, plates with a hunt and Eros. The *largitio* silver in Munich is thought to come from near the battle site of Chrysopolis.

Late antique silver excavated in Syria by Princeton and Yale Universities includes four objects at Daphne, a lampstand at Antioch and a ewer at Dura Europos. Elsewhere, church silver has been found at Stuma, near Latakiya, at several other sites, and at Homs (the large ewer now in Paris). Domestic plate said to come from Syria includes a ewer from Antioch, a ewer and bowl from Palmyra now in Berlin, a casket from an unspecified site and now in New York, and three treasures - one from near Latakiya (once photographed in the Damascus Museum and now in Cleveland: fig.3b, 8a), one from Homs, one from north Syria. An unpublished silver ewer in the Beirut museum was undoubtedly found in Lebanon, as was church plate found in the Beka Valley. Two plates now in the Getty, one with a Greek weight inscription, were said to have been found in the sea off the coast of Israel. From Egypt comes a plate stamped at Carthage in 541 and acquired in Cairo, a plate from Thebes now in Berlin, a set of six plates from Bubastis and spoons with Greek inscriptions from Touna el-Gebel (all now in Athens), a pair of plates from an unspecified location and now in Washington, and a bowl in New York (fig. 3a). A Byzantine *trulla* stamped in ca. 542 was found at Cherchel in Algeria. The large collection of plate and gold ornaments found on Cyprus (stamped material dated 578-651) is well known.

Some silver with no recorded provenance probably comes from the Eastern Empire; examples include the Meleager plate in Munich, the Artemis plate in Berlin and the Metropolitan ewer with Gospel scenes. Such suppositions are strengthened by the presence of Greek weight inscriptions or Greek stamps, although, strictly speaking, these indicate Eastern manufacture rather than findspot; stamped examples include the Dumbarton Oaks Silenus plate, the Ortiz maenad plate, and the Boston animal plate.

II. Subject Matter

Seen as cultural documents, late antique silver displays the mixed currents of pagan and Christian affiliations which characterize the period. On non-church plate, overtly pagan subjects appear on the Parabiago plate, the Corbridge lanx, and, possibly, the Sevso treasure's Achilles plate[18]. On others, pagan mythological scenes and subjects, which continue until 641/51[19], may merely express in classical disguise human pursuits and emotions, rather than any religious beliefs. In these contexts, "pagan" subjects were no longer considered

15. M. Mundell Mango, *Artistic Patronage. Buildings, Silver Plate and Books in the Roman Diocese of Oriens, AD 313-641,* Oxford, in press, chapter 2.
16. *Anthologia Palatina* IX.816.
17. For details, illustrations and references see Mundell Mango, *Archaeological Context* (note 13 *supra*).
18. L. Musso, *Manifattura suntuaria e committenza pagana nella Roma del IV secolo indagine sulla lanx di Parabiago,* Rome, 1983; *Byzantium* 1994, no. 15; Mundell Mango, *Seuso-Schatzfund* (note 1 *supra*), p. 77-79.
19. Cruikshank Dodd 1961, no. 75.

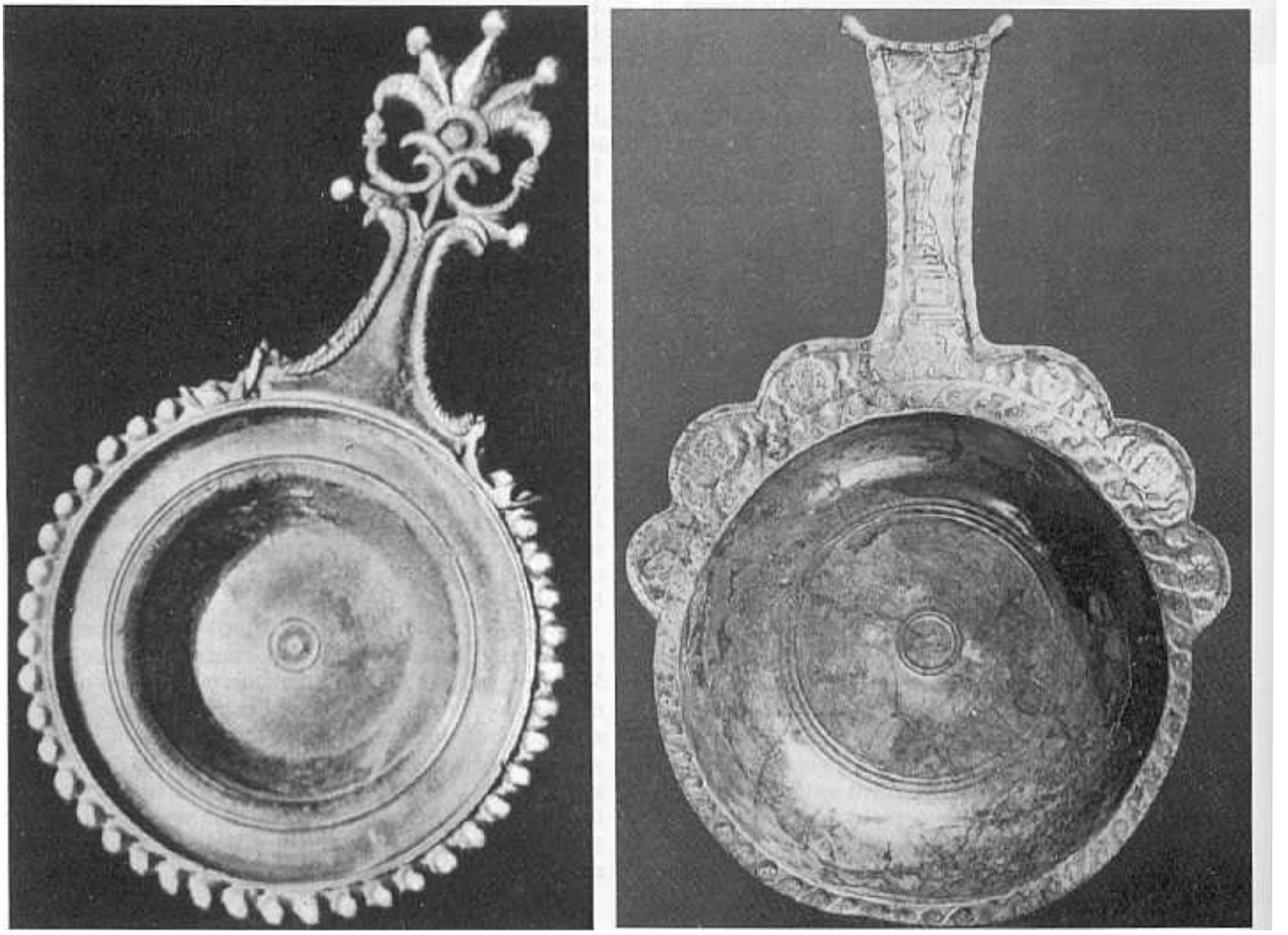


Fig. 5. – Bronze patera with beaded edge. Excavated in Tomb 121 at Ballana, Nubia.
(Photo after W. B. Emery and L. P. Kirwan, *The royal Tombs at Ballana and Qustul,* London, 1938, pl. 81, n° 121, 21).

Fig. 6. – Silver basin, stamped 613-629/30: Mitylene treasure from Lesbos
(Ph. court. of the Byzantine Museum, Athens).

religious, but represent a post-pagan classicism[20]. Genre subjects largely drop out as silver plate subjects after the fourth century, although pastoral scenes persist[21], and there is little overtly non-pagan religious subject matter on domestic silver. An exception, in addition to the David plates of ca. 630[22], is the cross: the box monogram on the Esquiline plates comes to be replaced by both the cruciform monogram (appearing in ca. 542) and the cross[23].

III. Function and Types

Groups of extant and recorded objects may be tabulated according to function. Extant objects prove that specific items of church plate (chalice, paten) were introduced by at least the fourth century and that domestic plate (plates, spoons, ewers, basins, lamps, etc.) continued to be made until at least the mid-seventh century. Several key texts fill out the picture offered particularly by the tabulated sets of recovered objects. The first-century Greek inventory from Egypt lists 228 plates *(pinakia, lanculae, scutulae),* bowls, dishes, egg cups and spoons, with an aggregate weight of 310 lbs. which belonged to one Gallus. Also from the East comes a Syriac list of 11 types of eating and drinking vessels which made up the silver *ministerium* in use at Edessa in 591. Designated by Greek, Latin and Semitic terms, these include three types of plates – *pinke* (Greek *pinakia), patore* (Latin *paterae), misriye* (Latin *missoria)* –, spoons (Syriac *tarode),* drinking cups (Syriac *kase d'sheqiya),* wine vessels (Syriac *mane d-hamra),* ewers *(qeste,* Greek *xeste)* and other wine containers *(koze,* Greek *choes), leqane* (Greek *lekane,* Latin *lagenae),* and two unidentified types (Syriac *saqroqe* and *tashtoqe).* The ninth-century Latin inventory of late antique silver donated in ca. 623 by the bishop Desiderius, a descendant of Visigothic royalty, to two churches at Auxerre, lists a total of 149 pieces weighing 505 lbs. (including *missoria* of 50 and 38 lbs. each) which comprise, perhaps, three services or parts thereof. Justinian's Digest, composed in 530-33, contains 40 legal opinions taken from Roman law of the first-third centuries, concerning legacies of gold and silver, where definitions are offered for what constitutes a dinner service or set of toilet articles, whether silver wash basins and cooking pots belong to table services; that drinking vessels include strainers and small pitchers, etc., reflecting, presumably, contemporary interests[24].

Domestic silver continues to be made in quantity into the seventh century. The 130-odd silver objects stamped in the sixth to seventh century (published to date) include: a military standard, 53 church objects and 79 domestic objects. The numbers of pieces stamped in each century are about equal, between 60 and 70. But while most sixth-century stamped silver is ecclesiastical, namely 46 pieces against 23 secular, the reverse is true for the seventh when 56 pieces are domestic and only seven are church silver. Furthermore, stamped domestic silver has been found at more locations than has church plate. Stamped domestic plate includes display and serving plates, bowls, *situlae,* handled washbasins, ewers, a *polycandelon,* lamps, lampstands, and spoons[25]. Unstamped silver includes all these types, as well as mirrors and furniture revetments (stools, table)[26].

IV. Shapes – plates, ewers, bowls

Certain types of domestic objects (namely plates, bowls, washing sets, situlae, mirrors) and church objects maintained their general shapes into the seventh century.

1. Plates and bowls

At least some *largitio* dishes were made to standard sizes because the weights of military donativa were set by law. A comparison of the diameters of dishes made in the fourth century with those stamped in the sixth and seventh centuries, demonstrates that certain approximate sizes (50, 35, 26 and 15 cm.) were adhered to for nearly 350 years[27]. Likewise maintained were both concave and flat profiles and a broad or high footring[28]. Both figural central medallions (until 577) and overall images (until 613/30) continued to ornament plates[29].

Rectangular plates are also made for both domestic and liturgical purposes[30]. Bowls with horizontal rims, with or without beading, form part of the Kaiseraugst treasure of the fourth century and similar bowls have been found in the Eastern Empire - exccavated at Daphne, found near Latakya and acquired in Egypt (fig. 3a-b)[31]. A related form – without the vertical edge to the rim – survives in the seventh-century East, on two bowls, both with niello decoration: one said to be from Homs with a rare bar monogram and the bowl from Cyprus stamped in Tarsus (?) in 641-51[32].

2. Ewers

Over 60 silver ewers are known from late antiquity. Roughly half have a fusiform body and the other half have a broad base. Many have a round rather than spouted mouth; handles, where they exist or survive, are angled or arched. The less common ewer with polygonal body, made in the fourth-fifth century, has its closest parallel in

20. *Byzantium* 1994, no. 16.
21. E.g. Cruikshank Dodd 1961, no. 9.
22. Cruikshank Dodd 1961, nos. 58-66.
23. Cruciform monogram: *Ibid.,* no. 12; cross: *Byzantium* 1994, no. 11-12, 96.
24. Mundell Mango, *Artistic Patronage,* chapter 2.
25. Cruikshank Dodd 1961, nos. 1, 3-7, 9-12, 14-16, 19, 23-24, 26, 28, 30-33, 36-46, 48-70, 72-79, 88, 90, 93-94, 96-97, 100.
26. Mundell Mango, *Artistic Patronage,* chapter 2.
27. Mundell Mango, *ibid.*
28. *Sevso Treasure.* Part Two (Ann Arbor, forthcoming).
29. Cruikshank Dodd 1961, nos. 26, 70.
30. *Byzantium* 1994, no. 15; Cruikshank Dodd 1961, no. 11.
31. *Kaiseraugst* 1984, nos. 47-51; Mundell Mango 1986, no. 96. I wish to thank Dr. Margaret Frazer for arranging for me to examine and photograph the bowl from Egypt in the Metropolitan Museum.
32. M. Lazovic, N. Dürr, et al., *Objets byzantins de la collection du Musée d'Art et d'Histoire,* in *Genava,* 25, 1977, p. 25-26 no. 12 and p. 40 fig. 9; *Byzantium* 1994, no. 135.

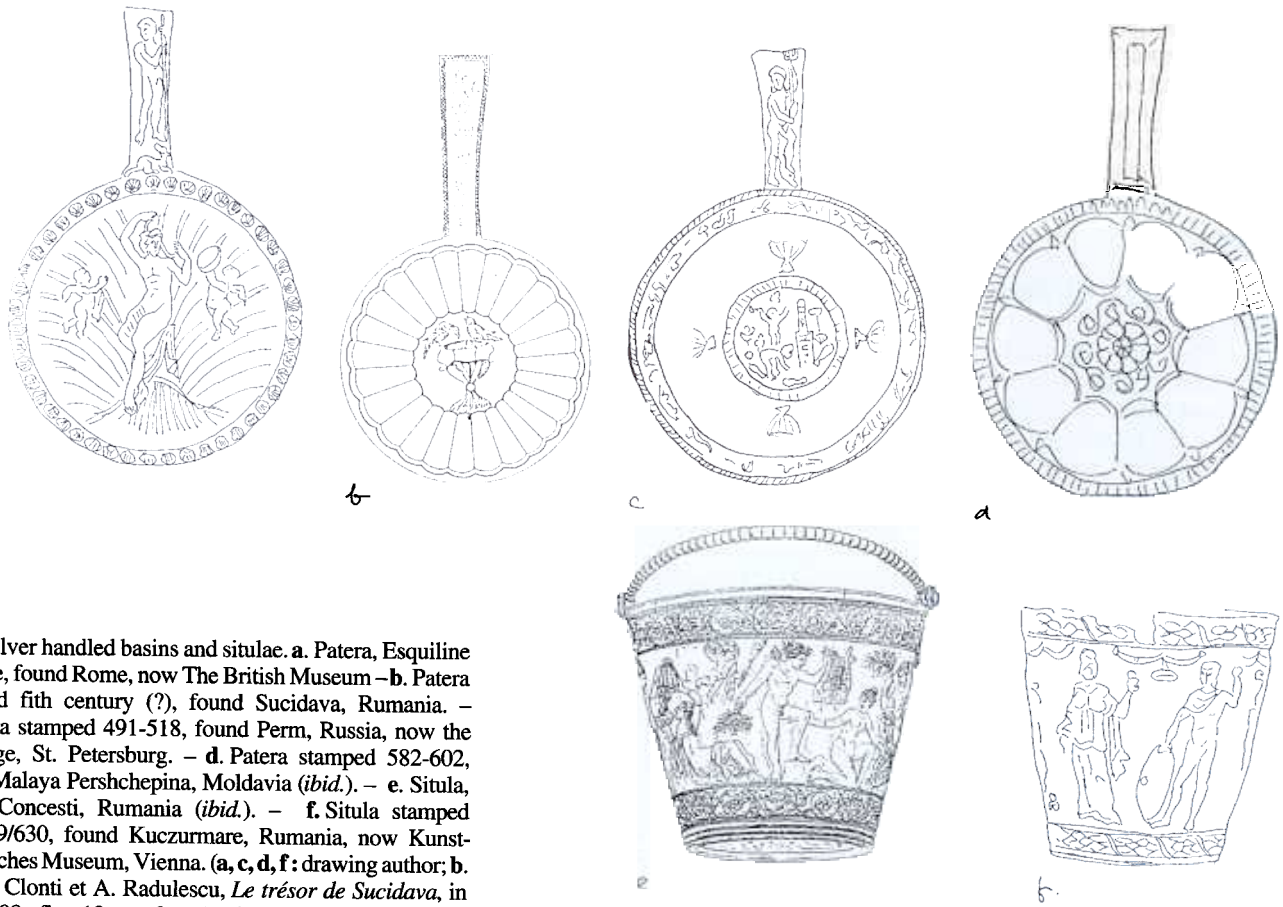


Fig. 7. – Silver handled basins and situlae. **a**. Patera, Esquiline treasure, found Rome, now The British Museum – **b**. Patera stamped fith century (?), found Sucidava, Rumania. – **c**. Patera stamped 491-518, found Perm, Russia, now the Ermitage, St. Petersburg. – **d**. Patera stamped 582-602, found Malaya Pershchepina, Moldavia (*ibid.*). – **e**. Situla, found Concesti, Rumania (*ibid.*). – **f**. Situla stamped 613-629/630, found Kuczurmare, Rumania, now Kunsthistorisches Museum, Vienna. (**a, c, d, f :** drawing author; **b**. after T. Clonti et A. Radulescu, *Le trésor de Sucidava*, in *RA*, 1988, fig. 12; **c** after A. Odobesco, *Le trésor de Petrossa*, Paris, 1899-1900, II, IV, fig. 19).

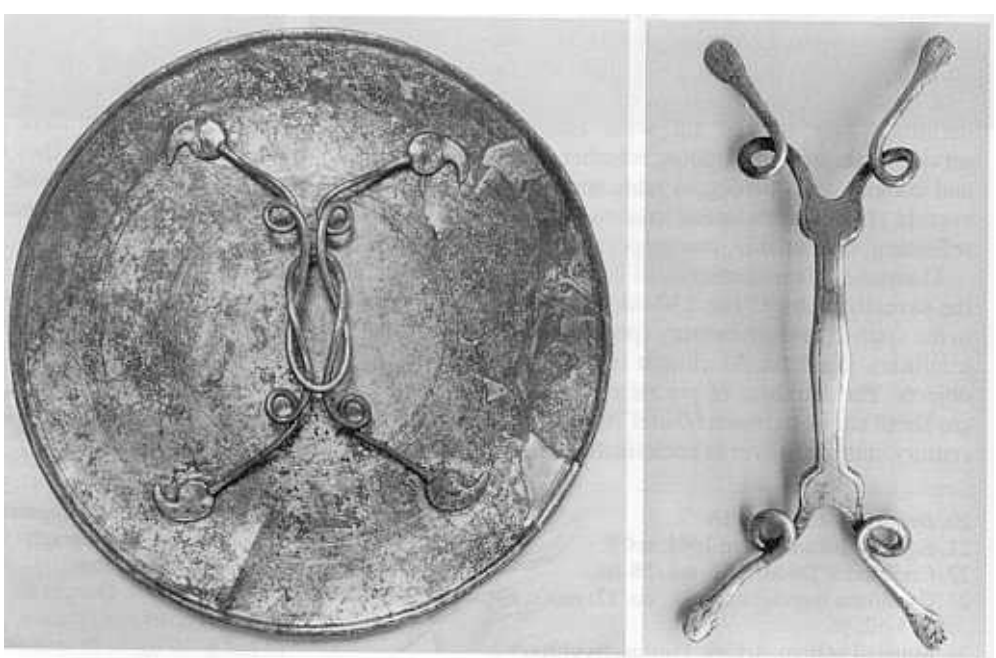


Fig. 8. – **a.** Silver mirror, fourth century (?): part of treasure near Latakiya, Syria. The Cleveland Museum of Art (ph. a) – **b.** Silver mirror handle: Lampsacus treasure from Asia Minor, objects dated to sixth and seventh centuries, British Museum (photo Trustees of the Bristish Museum).

the ewer stamped 582-602, which likewise has a webbed foot[33]. The fusiform ewer of the fourth-fifth century (fig. 4b)[34] appears in sixth-century Byzantium[35] (the Sion Treasure ewer and the Magi ewer in New York) as well as further east in Bactria where a ewer found in a Chinese burial of AD 569 was apparently made (fig. 4a) and in Sasanian Persia. The two ewers illustrated here (fig. 4) share beaded rims, a combination of fusiform bodies and convex mouldings, friezes of mythological decoration in relief, and large animated thumbpieces. It is fair to say that whoever made the prototype of the ewer on the left had seen something that looked like the ewer on the right[36].

3. Basins, *situlae*, mirrors

Two types of wash basins with straight handles – the patera and trulla – retain their traditional shapes, decorative layout and aquatic subject matter throughout late antiquity. The Esquiline patera and that stamped under Anastasius have similar figures on their flat handles and similar putti inside (fig. 7a,c)[37]. The shell motifs of the Esquiline vessel are repeated on the patera stamped 582-602 (fig. 7d),[38] which likewise has a fluted body as does another patera stamped in the fifth century (fig. 7b). Two trullas, dated 536-47 and 641-51, respectively, have handles similar to two vessels shown here (fig. 7a, from the Esquiline; fig. 7c, from Perm) as well as similarly shaped and ornamented attachment plates; their bodies are also very similar[39]. One of two basins in the Mitylene treasure both stamped 613-30, has related decoration in niello inlay (fig. 6). There are obvious correspondances between the fourth-fifth-century situla in the Concesti treasure, with Greek weight inscription, and the Kuczurmare situla stamped in ca. 630[40]: the shape is the same as is the frieze of deities banded top and bottom by foliate borders (fig. 7e-f). A silver mirror with knotted handle incorporating flowers, found in Britain and ascribed to the second century[41], has a later, somewhat simpler parallel in a small mirror said to come from Thessaly as well as that in the Latakiya treasure in Cleveland (fig. 8a)[42]. This last has four distinctive extra loops between knot and terminal (replacing perhaps the four flowers) which reappear on the unknotted mirror handle in the Lampsacus Treasure of the sixth-seventh centuries (fig. 8b).

4. Chalices and patens

Chalice and paten forms seen already in the fourth-century Water Newton church treasure reappear in later centuries. The kantharos shaped vessel with two handles from Water Newton resembles the chalice recently identified as that of Ardaburius of the mid-fifth century[43]. Far more common in the sixth-seventh centuries and later in the Eastern Empire, however, are the shapes of two other types of chalice. Both repeat the trumpet foot with knop. With one exception, the first type with broader bowl (ratio Height:Diameter 1:1.8) and soldered foot is always stamped (AD 542-610); the second type is unstamped and has a taller bowl (already foreshadowed in an inscribed, footless bowl at Water Newton) and foot mechanically attached by a separate ring[44]. The basic shape of the Water Newton paten – a flat base, raised sides and a flat rim – was retained for centuries, in both West (the Gallunianu Treasure) and East (patens found in Turkey, Syria, Lebanon); stamped examples range from 491-615 (or later)[45]. Some patens (those of Paternus, the Sion treasure and the Sarabaon church) have a foot ring[46].

V. Techniques, weights

The techniques of silver working remained basically the same between the fourth and mid-seventh centuries. Repoussé work continued, two phases of which are represented by the Milan reliquary of the 390's and the Stuma paten of 577[47]. Silver appliqués can be detected occasionally, a recently studied example being that of the Sevso Meleager plate, while a sixth- century example is offered by the bowl from Tavas[48]. Continuing to look to the Sevso treasure for outstanding examples of earlier metalworking, the griffin feet of the two situlas can be

33. *Sevso Treasure* Part One, nos. 6-7; Cruikshank Dodd 1961, no. 31.
34. *Sevso Treasure,* Part One, nos. 10-12.
35. The Sion Treasure ewer: S. A. Boyd, *A "Metropolitan" Treasure from a Church in the Provinces: An Introduction to the Study of the Sion Treasure,* in Boyd and Mundell Mango (eds.), *Ecclesiastical Silver Plate* 1992, p. 22 no. 17; I should like to thank Susan Boyd for allowing me to study this ewer at Dumbarton Oaks. The Magi ewer in New York: M. Frazer in Mundell Mango, *Silver* 1996, no. 86.
36. See M. Mundell Mango, *Byzantine, Sasanian and Central Asian Silver,* in C. Balint (ed.), *Kontakte zwischen Iran, Byzanz und der Steppe in den 6.-7. Jh.* (in press).
37. *Esquiline Treasure* 1981, no. 33; Cruikshank Dodd, 1961, no. 1.
38. Cruikshank Dodd 1961, no. 30.
39. Cruikshank Dodd 1961, nos. 14, 77.
40. Matzulevich, *Antike* (note 2 *supra*), pls. 7-11, 44-46; Cruikshank Dodd, 1961, no. 56.
41. J. M. C. Toynbee, *Art in Britain under the Romans,* Oxford, 1964, p. 334-335, pl. LXXVIIIc.
42. Thessaly: private collection; unpublished. Latakiya: W. M. Milliken, *Early Byzantine Silver,* in *Bulletin of The Cleveland Museum of Art,* 45, 1958, illustration after p. 41.
43. Water Newton: K. S. Painter, *Water Newton* 1977, no. 6, pl. 6. Ardaburius: A. Demandt, *Der Kelch von Ardabur und Anthusa,* in *DOP,* 40, 1986, p. 113-117.
44. The taller bowl is already foreshadowed in an inscribed, footless bowl at Water Newton: K. S. Painter, *cit.,* fig. 4.
45. Water Newton: K. S. Painter, *cit.,* fig. 3. Turkey, Syria, Lebanon: Cruikshank Dodd 1961, nos. 2, 20, 25, 27, 29, 98 and Mundell Mango 1986, nos. 4-6, 34-36, 39, 60, 63-64, 74-75. Gallunianu: *ibid.*, 81.
46. Cruikshank Dodd 1961, no. 2; Boyd, *"Metropolitan"* (note 35 *supra*), p. 16; Mundell Mango 1986, no. 75.
47. H. Buschhausen, *Die spätrömischen Metallscrinia und frühchristlichen Reliquiare,* I. Teil: *Katalog,* Vienna, 1971, no. B 11, B pls. 38-42; Mundell Mango 1986, *Silver,* no. 34.
48. Sevso Meleager plate: *Sevso Treasure* Part One, no. 2. Tavas bowl: *Dumbarton Oaks Collection* I, no. 6. I should like to thank Susan Boyd for bringing the appliqués on the Tavas bowl to my attention and for allowing me to study and photograph the object at Dumbarton Oaks.

compared with the peacock and dolphin feet of the restored Sion censer of ca. 565 (fig. 1)[49] Other comparisons between the two treasures can be made with the openwork of the Sevso ewer handles and the Sion polycandela[50]. The sixth-century Antioch chalice represented carved, as opposed to cut, openwork which has been compared with that of the silver Tiflis kantharos ascribed to the fourth century; both have the distinctive knopped foot which characterizes Byzantine chalices as well as Chinese vessels[51]. The kantharos shape of the Tiflis vessel is repeated on lamps in the Sion and Kaper Koraon treasures, stamped 565-578[52]. The articulated lobes on the lower body of these lamps continue the geometric handling of vessel shapes in the earlier, fourth-fifth centuries[53]. The classical relief palmettes on the Syrian lamp also ornament the fluted rim of a Sion paten[54]. Heavily beaded rims on silver objects (fig. 3b, 4b) apparently stop during the fifth century but continue on cast copper-alloy vessels in Egypt (fig. 5), a phenomenon which may have implications for the origin of the beads; they also enter Central Asian (fig. 4a) and Sasanian silver[55].

Niello inlay continues to be used in the sixth-seventh centuries, mostly for inscriptions (fig. 2) and wreath borders[56]. One example of figural inlay is that of one Mytilene patera, stamped ca. 630, which has a standing Aphrodite, four heads and wave pattern, once backed by niello (fig. 6)[57]. The continuity of geometric ornamental patterns in niello is illustrated by medallions and borders on dishes in the Mildenhall, Latakiya, Homs and Cyprus finds (the last two date to the seventh century)[58]. A final word will be offered on gilding. Late use of rectangular sheets of gold leaf are clearly visible on the Stuma flabellum and paten, both stamped 577/8[59] and have been detected on other objects of the Kaper Koraon treasure[60]. The Maenad and Silenus plate (stamped in 613-630) and the Maenad and Snake plate, both in the Hermitage, represent an innovation in gilding, which is repeated in Sasanian silver, where the gilding is applied to the background rather than to the raised decoration[61].

Conclusion

The system which provided the control stamps, which allow us to discuss the chronology of eastern silver with confidence, was probably also the centralizing force by which this later silver remained relatively conservative. The hypothesis that the state manufactured the silver which it stamped is supported both by recent scientific work, by Dr. Pieter Meyers, regarding the composition of stamped silver (in particular the trace elements in added copper) and by art historical observations regarding consistency in size, shape and weight of stamped objects[62].

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49. *Sevso Treasure* 1994, nos. 8-9; Boyd, *"Metropolitan"* (note 35 *supra*), p. 22 no. 18, fig. S18.1-2.
50. *Sevso Treasure* 1994, fig. 6-6; 7-7; 11- 11 and 12; Boyd, *"Metropolitan" (cit.)*, fig. S25.1, S28.1, S31.1.
51. Mundell Mango 1986, no. 40; eadem, *"Byzantine, Sasanian"* (note 36 *supra*).
52. Boyd, *"Metropolitan" (cit.)*, fig. S37.1-2; Mundell Mango 1986, no. 33.
53. *Esquiline Treasure* 1981, p. 42-43 and pls. 12-16, 22-24, 31, 44; also *Sevso Treasure*, Part One, nos. 6-7, 13.
54. Mundell Mango 1986, no. 33; Boyd, *"Metropolitan" (cit.)*, fig. S3.2 and S1.5.
55. Mundell Mango, *"Byzantine, Sasanian"* (note 36 *supra*).
56. Inscriptions: Mundell Mango 1986, fig. 1.2, 2.2, 19.1, 23.1, 33.2, 34.2, 35.2, 37.2, 38.2, 81.1; borders and motifs (including monograms): Cruikshank Dodd 1961, nos. 5, 12, 28, 32, 36-42, 45-46, 51-55, 67-69, 73, 76.
57. Cruikshank Dodd 1961, no. 50.
58. *Mildenhall Treasure* 1977, fig. 10-12; Milliken, *Bulletin* (note 42 *supra*), illustrations after p. 41; Lazovic et al. in *Genava* (note 32 *supra)*, p. 25; *Byzantium* 1994, no. 135.
59. Mundell Mango 1986, p. 147, 159.
60. Snow and Weisser, *ibid.*, p. 47.
61. E.g. *Wealth of the Roman World* 1977, nos. 316, 867, 868.
62. P. Meyers, *Elemental Compositions of the Sion Treasure and Other Byzantine Silver Objects*, in *Ecclesiastical Silver Plate* 1992, p. 169-189; Mundell Mango, *Silver Stamping, ibid.*, p. 212-214.